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CIVIL SOCIETY IN POLITICAL DEMOCRATIZATION:  
SOCIAL MOVEMENT IMPACTS AND INSTITUTIONAL POLITICS\*SUH DOOWON  
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*The end of long-standing authoritarianism in the late twentieth century provoked a global resurgence of civil society in the Third World that has driven scholars increasingly to ask how revitalized social movements impact democratic progress. Despite daunting theoretical and methodological problems in studying movement outcomes, and disparate historical and social conditions producing diverse, contending views of movement effects, this article confirms that institutionalization of movements is a major, though not sole, mechanism for consolidating and advancing democracy. It provides an institutional route to influence state policy-making and allows movement groups to forge political alliances with reformist power elites within polity. Movement institutionalization requires a particular melding of movement organization characteristics and favorable political opportunities that vary widely by time and context. It promotes democracy as long as the social movement organization maintains its identity and autonomy vis-à-vis state power, the state is open, and democratic parties enjoy influence within government. This article ascertains the assets and liabilities of previous research on the causal relationship between social movements and political democratization and suggests possibilities for future research, but acknowledges that great theoretical, methodological, and empirical challenges remain.*

**Key Words:** *democracy, civil society, social movements, policy-making, the state*

## INTRODUCTION

The sudden mid-1970s collapse of authoritarianism in Southern Europe, including Spain and Portugal, ushered in unprecedented opportunities that emancipated citizens from authoritarian repression and unleashed rapid political democratization. The wave of democratization washed beyond Southern Europe to engulf most Third World societies in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and even former East European Soviet-satellite countries. The astounding scope and rapidity of contemporary democratization's growth led Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington (1991) to dub it a "global resurgence of the third-wave democratization" and ignited wide scholarly inquiry

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into political democratization's origins, processes, and consequences.

Among the many theoretical perspectives developed, one stands out. A group of prominent political scientists, initially skeptical about the sustainability and consolidation of the resurgent democracy and wary of reversion to authoritarianism perhaps through another military coup, collaborated to investigate in historical, comparative terms the modalities of democratization, to identify the main negotiators of power transfer from incumbent despotic leaders to democratic advocates, and to consider the prospects for further democratic consolidation.<sup>1</sup> A utilitarian game-theoretical approach that prioritizes the strategic calculations of both government and opposition political leaders in the peaceful transition from authoritarianism to electoral (thus limited) political democracy heavily imbued their work. Academics with such sophisticated utilitarian theories of democratic transition and consolidation are often called "transitologists" and "consolidologists."

This elite-centered, strategic pact-making, game-theoretical stance, despite its tremendous contributions and influence, is criticized by a variety of scholars with competing theoretical and methodological views (Edles, 1995; Kitschelt, 1993; Yashar, 1999). One of the most frequent detractors faults game theory's view of the role of civil society. Game theory considers civil society "ephemeral": Civil society resurges only after democratization expands political opportunities. It thus is a result, not cause, of political liberalization and tends to be short-lived with limited political leverage in the course of regime transfer and democratic consolidation. This low estimation of the impact of civil society is widely refuted by scholars based on their in-depth comparative, historical studies. Nevertheless, such revived analytic focus on civil society's (in particular, a variety of social movements including labor)<sup>2</sup> contributions to "social" and "political" democratization — the former being "civil society democratization,"

<sup>1</sup> Their joint efforts produced a mid-1980s four-volume, immediate "classic" for students of contemporary political democratization (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986; O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead, 1986a, 1986b, 1986c).

<sup>2</sup> Obviously, the conceptual boundaries of civil society are much broader than those of social movements. In addition to social movements, interest groups and non-governmental organizations and their networks constitute civil society (Choi, 2005). Yet as the focus of analysis lies in the roles of social movement organizations in political democratization in this paper, the terms civil society and social movements are used here interchangeably.

the latter “state democratization” — itself lacks analytic rigor, marred by methodological difficulties, causal vagueness, and thus theoretical ineptitude.<sup>3</sup>

This paper provides a more elaborate explanatory framework that addresses these problems. It examines the role of civil society from three angles: the kinds of causal impacts of civil society (with a particular focus on those of social movements); civil society organizational features (including tactics/strategies, organizational structure and leadership, collective action repertoires, and relationships with other agents of democratization); and the historical, domestic, and international circumstances that favor civil society. This study’s theoretical contributions yield a more balanced — though not definitive — understanding of democratization by exploring not only power from “above” but also power from “below” and clarify the relatively under-explored theoretical question of how social movements lead to political as well as social transformation.<sup>4</sup>

#### COMBINED STRATEGY OF POLITICAL PROTEST AND INSTITUTIONAL POLITICS FOR DEMOCRATIZATION

##### *Beyond Corporatism*

The conventional and most influential theoretical paradigm that relates the role of civil society to state democratic policy-making is “neo-corporatism,” pioneered by Schmitter (1979, 1983). It contends that corporatist mechanisms are necessary to convey civil society demands to decision-making forums and to negotiate sustainable democratic development. In other words, democratic consolidation requires that interests find corporate, institutional expression that

<sup>3</sup> As scientifically and systematically illuminating the causal relationship between social movements and social transformation is deeply problematic, it is relatively under-explored and in need of theoretical and methodological innovation. This is ironic given that researchers are usually drawn to social movement study based on the tacit assumption that social movements are an important variable for social transformation (Giugni, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Davis (1994) finds the causal and analytic link claimed between social movements and democratic institutionalization unconvincing and cites the need to examine the context in and process by which political mobilization fosters democratization. In the same vein, Haber (1996) and Encarnación (2001) argue that civil society impacts depend on a specific institutional and political setting and that the power of civil society to shape democracy is subordinate to and circumscribed by that of political institutions.

incorporates them in decision-making. More forcefully, Przeworski (1991, 1995) argues that dual transformation — economic liberalization and political democratization — with minimal popular defection or disruption requires that labor submit to the hegemony and leadership of conservatives in the matter of political democratization and of the bourgeoisie in economic reform — which he calls “concertation.” Corporatism (à la Schmitter) and concertation (Przeworski) both stress the need for centralized, strong, and capable peak organizations for successful collection, articulation, and representation of interests.<sup>5</sup>

Though these paradigms have some power and feasibility, they raise serious empirical and theoretical questions. Encarnación (1996) contends that centralized organizational structure is a result of concertation in democratizing societies, but a cause in established democracy. Further, the impact of organizational structure on concertation is contingent because concertation flourishes without centralized labor — as in Spain — and flounders with it — as in Argentina. Social movement professionalization and bureaucratization runs the risk that civil society will be manipulated by corporate intermediators that serve political parties or the state or be directly incorporated into them (Diamond, 1999). The result is what Michels (1962) calls the “iron law of oligarchy,” which saps civil society autonomy and social and political power. That is, once assimilated, activists are co-opted, protest goals are preempted, and civil society atrophies (Piven and Cloward, 1977; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens, 1992; Selznick, 1966).

Negative outcomes of institutionalization on movements are by no means rare. When Western capitalist systems developed neo-corporatist social regulations to overcome the crisis in the regime of accumulation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, labor movements participated in a “tripartite commission” that transformed them into an important political foundation and representative for left-wing parties. Such institutionalization made them a political force alongside the state and capital, but diminished their focus on social transformation that served collective labor or advanced democracy. Relations between rank-and-file labor and bureaucratized left-wing labor movement leadership grew estranged, factions emerged, flaws arose in internal democracy, and movement political objectives grew more limited, such

<sup>5</sup> Some advocates of these views emphasize evidence that civil society promotes political democratization when movement activists and progressive intellectuals join the government, as in South Africa’s “radical reform” (Adler and Webster, 1995).

as material gains for labor movement members alone.<sup>6</sup> Ultimately, institutionalization of labor movements prompted “new social movements” to form — particularly in the early 1960s — demanding expanded participatory opportunities and proposing diverse alternatives.

In more theoretical terms, social movements require ongoing collective power — that is, the ability to mobilize collective action — to effectively confront power elites (Offe and Wiesenenthal, 1980). A certain degree of autonomy and independence is indispensable for social movement organizations to maintain their resource base and collective action capability. If they win popular recognition as legitimate and potent representatives of their cause and determine that such success requires increased bureaucratic and hierarchical organization — including becoming part of institutionalized politics — to manage enhanced resources, they risk losing sight of original demands. They may reformulate goals to suit what their new organizational structure and the existing political system can accommodate and are thus subject to co-optation by their counterparts, having lost their *raison d’être* (Piven and Cloward, 1977). From this perspective, institutionalization constrains and distracts social movements from achieving social transformation. It greatly undermines their ability to mobilize popular collective action and support as their goals narrow to a self-centered focus and they lose their ability to confront the status quo they have newly joined.

#### *Toward a “Dualistic” Strategy*

The strategies civil society movements use to intervene in politics are, however, much more diverse than the literature implies. Institutionalization of social movements does not always entail movement demise via co-optation. More recently many scholars have supplemented discussion of confrontational and disruptive tactics with the institutional and participatory repertoires of collective action, indicating this boosts civil society’s overall leverage (Collier, 1999; Goldstone, 2004; Guidry, 2003; Webster and Adler, 2000). Collier’s (1999) historical comparative analysis of democratization finds that “in” status groups often play a “mobilization game,” and “out” groups a

<sup>6</sup> Feminist movements experienced the same demise when they aligned with labor unions and entered the institutionalized political arena, as the latter championed chauvinistic ideologies (Hanagan, 1998).

"participation game." To participate in the negotiations indispensable to democratic transition and consolidation, collective action must assume some form of institutionalization (Garretón, 1989).<sup>7</sup> Offe (1990) thus concludes that examining the conditions under which social movements maintain a non-institutional and confrontational political logic is more interesting than their institutionalization if the potential benefits of political institutionalization are considered.

The finding that social movement organizations often pursue political participation as well as popular mobilization deviates from the conventional understanding of their innate nature. The pervasive concept defines them as groups of densely tied people who share a solid collective identity they maintain outside institutional politics and who use sustained collective action to contend against state political authority in pursuit of clearly articulated goals that stand to benefit not only movement participants but the public at large (Gamson, 1990; Tilly, 1978, 1994). This implies that if collective actors, having achieved some measure of legitimacy through collective action that confronts and disrupts their counterparts, then establish institutionalized channels to further engage with power elites through peaceful negotiation and compromise, they no longer are social movements but political interest groups.

However, recent in-depth historical comparative studies of civil society impacts on democratizing government reveal a more complex and multifaceted relationship between social movements and the state, suggesting conventional definitions of social movements are too narrow (Collier, 1999; Giugni and Passy, 1998; Goldstone, 2004; Guidry, 2003; Hanagan, 1998; Webster and Adler, 2000). Goldstone (2004: 336) argues, "There is only a fuzzy and permeable boundary between institutionalized and non-institutionalized politics .... Social movement activity is not so much an alternative to institutionalized politics, diminishing as the latter increases; rather it is a complementary mode of political action, which increases even as democratic politics spread." Goldstone (2004: 344) continues, "The notion that there are 'in' groups and 'out' groups, and that the latter

<sup>7</sup> According to Giugni and Passy (1998), social movements gradually institutionalize, that is, join the political power structure, in three stages: first, consultation with the state or parties articulates movement information or opinion as well as policy recommendations; second, integration gives movements some responsibility for policy implementation; and third, delegation empowers movements with a degree of responsibility in policy-making and policy-implementation.

engage in protests while the former engage in politics, is a caricature with little relation to reality.”

It is also overly simplistic to contend that only in societies that have consolidated democracy can civil movement proliferation enhance democratization, while in the Third World, where democratic transition and consolidation are tenuous, the state is unable to survive, let alone accommodate, the various, conflicting demands, confrontation, and intransigence different social groups press (Bresser Periera *et al.*, 1993). In other words, a dichotomized analysis in which social movements — institutionalized or not — are perceived to be effective for established democracies but counter-productive for democracies in transition or consolidation is inadequate. Both the impact of institutionalization on movements and the state’s capacity at different stages of democracy to productively engage with movements in their various forms are more complex than many suggest.

Conceptual distinction between social movements and interest group politics remains useful, but the mode of interaction between social movements and the state is far from uniform — conflictive and/or cooperative, depending on time, place, and issue — amounting to what Giugni and Passy (1998) term “conflictual cooperation.”<sup>8</sup> The complementary operation of these strategies resolves empirical findings that are problematic when definitions of social movements are too constricted. Such flexibility enhances social movements’ overall political leverage in democratizing civil society and the state (Goldstone, 2004). Finessing a delicate balance between the two strategies, a “dualistic strategy” (Cohen and Arato, 1992), is necessary, given that civil society may lose influence and legitimacy if it appears rigidly partisan, factional, and intent on egoistical gains at public expense, in which case political democratization suffers (Webster and Adler, 2000). In other words, keeping one foot in the polity, the other in civil society, best allows social movement groups to both productively influence the state in policy-deliberation, -making, and -implementation, and assure civil society vitality with minimal possible encumbrance of a movement decline through co-optation (Giugni and Passy, 1998).

Movement institutionalization clearly can advance democracy in at least one respect. Political parties in an established political system are more resilient and resource abundant than social movement

<sup>8</sup> As Hanagan (1998) shows, the relationship between social movements with political parties has historically oscillated between disengagement and integration.

organizations. By entering or forming institutions, social movements are more on a par with parties and the state. As “democratic institutions,” they can realize their political objectives and achieve social reform through regularized political channels that reduce the risk of marginalization and enhance legitimacy (Giugni and Passy, 1998; Hanagan, 1998; Kubik, 1998). Institutionalization can assist achieving movement objectives in procedural, substantive, and political terms. Such institutionalization may take one of two forms: first, as in South American feminist movements, social movements may press for and achieve institutionalized entrance that allows them to pursue “bottom-up” demands in state policy-making; second, in a “top-down” process, the state may invite and enable movement participation — that is, institutionalization — to resolve emerging social problems concerning which it lacks information or knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

#### CONDITIONS PROMOTING MOVEMENT INSTITUTIONALIZATION WITHOUT CO-OPTATION

##### *Social Movement Institutionalization*

Given that social movements pursue political agenda or engage with political actors, which means interacting with political institutions — parties and the state — what conditions compel social movement institutionalization and, if it occurs, how can co-optation and preemption by state power elites be avoided? The social movement literature has highlighted the risk of co-optation when social movement activists and organizations are incorporated into the state or otherwise institutionalized, but rarely addresses how to elude co-optation yet remain integrated or constructively engaged. Moreover, understanding of what causes movement institutionalization is incomplete because analysis often makes unfounded teleological and determinist assumptions. Tarrow’s (1994) famous theorization on movement trajectories suggests that social movements move from an oppositional protest posture to one increasingly bureaucratic and institutional that allows them to negotiate with or become part of the political establishment. Similarly, Offe (1990) discerns three sequential movement developmental stages — “takeoff,” followed by

<sup>9</sup> The state in South America used this strategy when it integrated homosexuals in decisions on how to deal with AIDs proliferation (Giugni and Passy, 1998).



“stagnation,” and ultimately, “institutionalization.” Contending that people join social movements and collective action based on rational calculation that the benefits of protest exceed costs, Przeworski (1991) avers that they rationally choose to shift strategies once protest secures them opportunities to engage with the state through institutional means that better assure routine political access and influence. At that point, in his view, participants decide that radical collective street action is less beneficial than inclusion in established state processes — or as his dictum states, they believe they must choose “to participate or to perish.”

Yet if we agree that social movements are not fixed entities but a process that frequently entails both continual confrontation and collaboration with power-holders (Melucci, 1989; Tilly, 1994), then movement institutionalization can be understood as one possible outcome of that process. If the two sides discover they have competing but often reconcilable interests, or even shared ones, they may decide they are best pursued through institutionalized processes. This carries several crucial implications. First, movement institutionalization requires both that movement actors decide to join the state apparatus and that power elites elect to incorporate them and positively respond to demands (Dryzek, 1996; Giugni, 1998; Giugni and Passy, 1998). Diverse factors limit and facilitate their respective decisions. Second, to proactively respond to social movement demands the state must possess a modicum of capacity and propensity (McAdam, 1996; Tilly, 1994). It is only inclined to encourage such civil society institutionalization if, based on movement vitality, it considers it politically necessary to avoid disruption of the democratic process. Otherwise, the state will be inclined to dismiss movements as trivial and irrelevant distractions.

This necessity of a match between state capacity and civil society vitality for movement institutionalization to occur and promote democratization indicates a corollary — power imbalances do arise, with negative implications for both institutionalization and democratization (Oxhorn, 1995). Moreover, any benefit from civil society movement institutionalization and integration accrues only if each has relative autonomy from the other. This ensures state capacity and inclination to engage and movements’ continued viability and ability to avoid co-optation. Although this requires blending independence with dependence, what emerges is a mutually reinforcing relationship between the state and civil society, an

interdependence that optimizes the process of democratization (Kwon, 2004). Still, the state's capacity and inclination to productively engage with civil society fundamentally determines whether the latter will advance, distract from, or be irrelevant to state democratization; that is, civil society's impacts are contingent (Giugni, 1998; Tilly, 1994).

*External Conditions: Political Opportunity Structures*

Generally speaking, exogenous conditions influence social movement outcomes — including institutionalization — more than endogenous ones, such as the necessary but not alone sufficient ability to maintain collective power (Tarrow, 1998; Tilly, 1994). For social movements to be institutionalized, external conditions — political opportunity structures — that allow demands to be transformed into substantive policy alternatives and promoted within the political process must exist. Two variables largely determine political opportunity structure — the nature of the state structure and distinctive character of political parties (Hipscher, 1998b). In Brazil, an open state and democratic parties proved essential for social movements to advance democracy. Chile's closed state structure and absence of democratic political forces effectively foreclosed opportunities for positive civic movement contributions (Hipscher, 1998b). In sum, expanded political opportunity structure is a critical intervening variable that mediates whether social movements will assume an institutionalized form that allows them to advance democracy.<sup>10</sup>

While an open state and democratic parties are structural aspects of movements' political opportunity structure, adequate understanding of the creation and character of political alliances requires a more contextual account of that structure that recognizes the interactive dynamics involved. History demonstrates that social movements' independent capacity to effect macro social transformation, including democratization, is often lacking or limited and requires strategic

<sup>10</sup> However, as the preceding discussion of interdependence intimates, the relationship between political opportunity structure and movements — institutionalized or not — is not unilateral, the former dictating the role of the latter; a reverse process also holds. Collective action, with or without movement institutionalization, may pressure existing political forces to pursue further political reform. Moreover, institutionalization itself expands movements' political clout by consolidating political collaboration among reformist political groups and providing more favorable conditions — including enhanced power, repertoires, and legitimacy — to pursue political objectives (Tarrow, 1998).

alliance with reformist political forces (Diamond, 1999). For example, collaboration with the Democratic Party proved critical for the American feminist movement to advance its agenda. As the Democratic Party included feminist movements in its advisory board processes and platform, the movements used the party political institution to publicize and legitimate their efforts and engineer success (Tarrow, 1994). The need for reformist alliances is critical, given that, historically, social movements that lack them or form other types of institutional alliances frequently deteriorate. For example, political and strategic alliance between traditional left-wing and right-wing political forces, one of several possible permutations, may relegate social movements that manage to enter the institutionalized political arena to political irrelevance, as such forces may favor the certainty of the status quo, which they dominate and from which they benefit. Alliances among or with existing non-reformist political forces tend to alienate and marginalize social movements politically and dilute their identity, particularly during economic crises (Offe, 1987).

Differing historical and political conditions create diverse possibilities for social movements to forge alliances with existing reformist political forces. Opportunities are relatively high when liberal democracy is vibrant and left-wing parties enjoy a solid position within the political system, as in Western liberal democracies. However, in Western Europe, the developing crisis in the social democratic welfare state since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century has led some left-wing parties to seek to become a popular, "catch-all party." This has attenuated their traditional foundation of labor class support, and pushed them to seek new alliances with and support from the new middle class, the carriers of new social movements. This history illustrates that shifting historical and political circumstances change what institutionalized alliances will prove most beneficial to advancing democracy, as Germany particularly illustrates.<sup>11</sup>

The historical background for Third World movement institutionalization differs from Western Europe. Unlike in revolutions, authoritarian collapse followed by transition to democracy does not summarily remove conventional dictatorial political forces. Strong authoritarian forces that remain during the transition toward democracy can either impede coalition between civic movement forces

<sup>11</sup> One of the structural conditions for the strategic change cited above is relative economic prosperity (Offe, 1987).

in support of radical participatory democracy and liberals in the political system or, conversely, facilitate movement institutionalization (Mainwaring and Viola, 1984). Most Third World countries in democratic transition were devastated by dictatorship. They experienced intermittent militant anti-dictatorship struggles until frustration reached critical mass and social movements erupted and relentlessly demanded and forced immediate change and gradual retreat of authoritarian power. As democratic transition ensued, collective and militant popular mobilization gave way to voluntary resolution of diverse conflicts of interests through mediation and democratic procedures and rules. The raw experience of dictatorship and remnants of conventional authoritarian forces were compelling reminders to movements of the need to develop democratic means of resolving diverse interests (Hipsler, 1998a). Should they fail, authoritarian or dictatorial forces could use popular dissatisfaction or the political vacuum to return to power by force or by capitalizing on popular disenchantment (Mainwaring and Viola, 1984). Indeed, even if such regression is substantially impossible, social movement forces tend to fear the possibility and become wary of sustained mobilization of collective action that might abet it (Kubik, 1998). This leads them to restrain the confrontational collective action that initiated reform and opt for more institutionalized modes of social movements (J. Valenzuela, 1989).

State character and the status of reformist forces within the state constitute the political environment that directly influences the prospects and procedures for social movement institutionalization (Giugni and Passy, 1998). First, in terms of state character, strong, "overdeveloped" states and states that respond to challenges by exclusionary strategies are less conducive to movement institutionalization than weak states and ones more inclusive. Centralized power structure and organized institutions for administrative management makes strong states more effective in policy formulation and implementation and less reliant on the assistance of other institutions or groups than weak states. They exclude social movement organizations, as they do not consider them trustworthy and legitimate allies and representatives of popular demands and opinion.

Second, with regard to the political status of reformist forces, in order for social movement organizations and reformist groups to forge successful policy-oriented alliance, social movement forces must be

incorporated into an existing political system within which reformist political forces already enjoy legitimacy and a measure of power. In addition, movement forces and reformist power elites must maintain mutual cohesion lest exposure to counter-attack by former power elites dilute their power (Offe, 1987; Sandoval, 1998). Movement institutionalization is particularly productive and viable when progressive groups with whom they ally dominate the political scene and welcome alliance.

*Internal Conditions: Social Movement Organizations*

While exogenous variables critically impact movement institutionalization and effectiveness, endogenous variables are also important. Several internal social movement attributes facilitate movement institutionalization (Giugni and Passy, 1998). First, when social movements present challenges that do not directly impugn the existing political authority, their legitimacy and concerns are more readily accepted by it, which expedites institutionalization. For example, if environmental movements stress the ravages of environmental destruction and the public benefits of prevention without implicating political power elites, they and their concerns are more likely to be welcomed in decision-making — become institutionalized — than had they presented those challenges as an indictment of the standing political system. When political power elites sense threat, movement suppression rather than induction into the institutional corridors is probable. Second, social movements with formal, professional, centralized, and bureaucratic structure are more readily institutionalized than those without. Such organizational attributes assist prompt resolution of disagreement within a movement according to designated procedures. Moreover, once movements so structured are institutionalized, they are adept at political compromise and negotiations, because they are able to generate consensus on what demands to present and do so in an effective and efficient hierarchical manner. Third, when movements have professional or specialized knowledge that the state needs in policy formulation, the state is more likely to draw them into the political arena.

For social movements to maintain collective power while participating in the established system, they must safeguard their organizational identity and autonomy, their original source of collective power (Cardoso, 1992; Sandoval, 1998). Institutionalization and

independence may appear antithetical, but can prove complementary. In particular, Third World states in the transition and consolidation democratization stages present a political climate in which social movements with adequate organizational identity and autonomy can maintain independence even as institutionalized participants, as their continued fight against the vestiges of authoritarianism makes them coequal with oppositional parties with whom they can ally (Dryzek, 1996; Sandoval, 1998). The loss of autonomy forfeits the opportunity to contribute to the advancement of democracy by abetting political compliance with and subordinate status to the "powers that be."<sup>12</sup>

Dryzek (1996) adds an additional requirement for movement institutionalization to benefit political democratization: assimilation of movement demands with state imperatives. He argues that every society has an endemic state imperative — such as "accumulation" (securing continuous capitalist development) or "legitimation" (keeping social and political order) — subject to change in different temporal environments. If movement demands are not compatible with the binding state imperative, politically institutionalized movement groups receive only symbolic rewards that lead to co-optation, as occurred with environmental movement groups in the Clinton administration. Dryzek (1996: 480) contends, "To the extent that public policy remains under the sway of state imperatives, groups whose inclusion coincides with no imperative will not easily acquire the tangible goods they value. They may be allowed to participate in the policy-making process, but outcomes will be systematically skewed against them" in which case, their legitimacy, integrity, and survival require them to opt for exclusion and continuing collective confrontation rather than political inclusion.

<sup>12</sup> In this respect, Törnquist's (1998: 130) distinction between "integration" and "incorporation" is apt: "One may distinguish historically between the *integration* of people into politics on the basis of relatively autonomous broad popular movements generated by comprehensive economic development (like in many parts of Western Europe), and the elitist *incorporation* of people with less solid organizations of their own into comparatively advanced polities in economically late developing societies (like in the Balkans and many third world countries)" (emphasis added). Social movement organizations that are politically institutionalized must be integrated, not incorporated, to advance state democratization.

## CONCLUSION: DEMOCRATIZATION — UNENDING DIALOGUE BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE STATE

The sweeping wave of democratization from the mid-1970s has generated tremendous Third World transformation at the national and global levels. Consequences encompass resurrection of long-suppressed civil society, democratization of tyrannical political systems, and formation of a “global civil society” network that links and solidifies civil society organizations across national borders (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986). Although democratization will unlikely be derailed by a return to authoritarianism, it has progressed in a more faltering fashion with more conspicuous inter-societal variance in tempo and quality than anticipated. Moreover, civil society in post-authoritarian countries has not invariably advanced democratization. It can fracture into groups pursuing diverse, perhaps conflicting collective interests — with or without mutual coordination — through ongoing, even violent, challenges to the state, which stands to reinstate repression in the political vacuum before democratization has taken hold and set democratic rule back. Even if nascent democratization manages a certain level of civil cohesion and peace, civil society's positive impact on political democratization — on institutional and procedural rule-making — is often limited by inopportune domestic structures and international environments, social movement organizations' strategic/tactical incompetence, and so forth (Encarnación, 2001; Huber, Rueschemeyer, and Stephens, 1997; Payne, 1991). This leads us to ask what post-transition circumstances help rejuvenate a civil society able to contribute to state democratization — an inquiry inadequately pursued due to unresolved complex conceptual, causal, theoretical, and methodological issues.

Although civil society vigor increases as revitalized popular protest both instigates and results from the retreat of authoritarianism and beginning of democratic transition, democratization is integrative — rather than unilateral as game-theorists propose — shaped both by popular demand from below as well as by negotiations among power elites from above (Collier, 1999). Moreover, if we think of democratization as having two main aspects — civil society and the state — it is essentially an ongoing, intimate, and complex relational outcome of interaction between the two, both conflictive and cooperative. This fluctuating interaction between the two dimensions of

democratization implies, first, the relation between the two is not always zero-sum but can be positive- or negative-sum (Ekiert, 1991; Ekiert and Kubik, 1999; Oxhorn, 1995); second, successful democratization of one often bears on that of the other; and third, for democratization to advance, both the strength and civility of society and the state's democratic policy-making capacity and propensity must increase.

The conceptual boundaries of democratization are huge, embracing multiple sub-dimensions — including political, institutional, social, and cultural areas. Possible civil society impacts on democratization are also multidimensional, and may alter the political system, shape institutional rules and procedures, foster civic norms, and inculcate democratic culture. Civil society's reach, however, does not encompass all aspects of democratization, or, at least, other forces influence democratization as well. Democratization's essential multi-dimensionality suggests the potential mutual conflict among diverse arenas of democratization (Brysk, 1994). For instance, "overly successful" civil society democratization can impede state democratization. Similarly, when state democratization excludes or limits popular participation in democratic rule-making, it restricts civil society democratization (Oxhorn, 1995). The same potential conflict among different arenas of democratization can equally obtain in the relationship between different phases or types of democracy. Thus, if we follow Huber, Rueschemeyer, and Stephens's (1997) categorization of three successive stages of democratic development from formal to participatory to social democracy, conditions that promote formal democracy do not always advance social democracy.<sup>13</sup>

Based on these theoretical premises, this paper seeks to clarify the causal impact of civil society on state democratization, which has not been clearly elaborated in the extant literature (Brysk, 1994; Haber, 1996; Oxhorn, 1995). The vast multidimensionality of democratization and limit to civil society influences on it imply that civil society's causal impact on political democratization is contingent — not a necessary, let alone sufficient, condition for political democratization, which sometimes advances without a robust civil society (Davis, 1994; Goldstone, 2004; Karl, 1990; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens,

<sup>13</sup> The contemporary emphasis in political democratization on individual rights and an autonomous market for economic reform tends to abet socioeconomic inequality, a serious impediment to subsequent social democracy, which demands minimal socioeconomic gaps in an egalitarian society (Törnquist, 1998).



1992; Schmitter, 1997; Tilly, 1995, 2000). To borrow Tilly's (1995) metaphor, democracy is a lake at the juncture of multiple small streams, some of them springing from civil society and others not. Therefore, no fixed, universal set of necessary and sufficient conditions for democratization exists. The causal effect of certain factors on democratization is contingent, that is, contextual — they occur only in the presence of certain other factors, times, and locations. By extension, this means multiple factors other than civil society and interactions among them must be accounted for when evaluating causal impacts of civil society (Tilly, 2000).

Among several characteristics of civil society that can influence its impact on political democratization, this article focuses on its institutionalization or lack thereof. Institutionalization is not inevitable in the course of social movement trajectories (Przeworski, 1991; Tarrow, 1994). It occurs only when both social movement leaders and members jointly seek to enter the institutional political arena and political elites stand ready to accept them. This conception of movement institutionalization reflects the understanding that social movements are not defined as a fixed entity but in relation to counterparts with potentially contending interests or identities socially and historically constructed, not structurally derived (Melucci, 1989; Tilly, 1994). Historical legacies, domestic structures, and international environments constrain the mutual arrangements the two sides make, in a process not unlike what Karl (1990) terms "structured contingency." External structural conditions delimit choice.

The emphasis on institutionalization as a salient vehicle for civil society to impact political democratization reflects the recent re-conceptualization of the nature of social movements. Their power and viability do not require an "outsider" status and contentious collective action mobilization vis-à-vis the political structure (Tarrow, 1994; Tilly, 1994). Social movements may navigate the amorphous, permeable boundary between non-institutional and institutional politics to achieve goals through both compromise and confrontation with polity members (Goldstone, 2004). Institutionalized engagement with the state — being a player in the political structure — can possibly put social movement organizations at risk of co-optation or preemption by policy-makers and eventual irrelevance. To maintain the integrity and autonomy necessary to promote political democratization, social movements must strategically balance movement politics (as "outsiders") and institutional politics (as "insiders"). Such a balance

derives in part from social movement organization activists' facile leadership and power elites' genuine concern for inclusion versus co-optation. However, both sides may also recognize the benefits each can accrue when civil society is vigorous and autonomous. A vital, engaged civil society can increase the state's capacity and propensity for political democratization, help social movements convey popular concerns from below in a non-threatening manner, bring special expertise into the policy-making arena, and convey and build popular support for the state and movements.

Although the importance of movement institutionalization and its potential contribution to political democratization have often been noted, engendering conditions have not been fully scrutinized, which requires in-depth, systematic, and historical-comparative research. Given that movement institutionalization derives from choices of civil society and the state, contingent upon external structures, we need, first, to bring both synchronic and diachronic perspectives to the historical backgrounds, external conditions, and international influences that provide the context for strategic calculations as to whether to participate (movements) and to incorporate (the state) (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens, 1992). Second, since the two sides that deliberate regarding movement institutionalization base choices on perceptions of likely benefit/loss, of the availability of political opportunities, of the impact of their counterparts' likely judgment, and so forth, we must consider their subjective interpretive frameworks — "cognitive structures" — if we are to understand why they reach certain conclusions and actions (Bermeo, 1997; Edles, 1995; Kitschelt, 1993; Suh, 2001, 2004). This requires drawing on the wisdom of the constructionist, "framing" perspective in analysis of movement institutionalization (Cress and Snow, 2000; Snow *et al.*, 1986; Snow and Benford, 1988, 1992).

This article indicates why previous studies of political democratization and the role of civil society in it have lacked explanatory power, but does not purport to offer solutions. Most premises it offers are highly hypothetical and require extensive empirical, historical, and comparative scrutiny to ascertain their theoretical validity and reliability. The explanatory framework elaborated here may lead future research on civil society and democratization in more promising directions if systematically conducted.

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